

Pragati

The Indian
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Review

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IN MEMORIAM

Making a leader*Excerpts from a lecture on leadership and discipline*

SAM HFI MANEKSHAW

THE FIRST, the primary, indeed the cardinal attribute of leadership is professional knowledge and professional competence. Now you will agree with me that you cannot be born with professional knowledge and professional competence even if you are the child of the prime minister, or the son of an industrialist or the progeny of a field marshal. Professional knowledge and professional competence have to be acquired by hard work and by constant study. In this fast-moving technologically developing world you can never acquire sufficient professional knowledge.

You have to keep at it, and at it, and at it. Can those of our political masters who are responsible for the security and defence of our country cross their hearts and say they have ever read a book on military history, on strategy, on weapons developments? Can they distinguish a mortar from a motor, a gun from a howitzer, a guerilla from a gorilla, though a vast majority of them resemble the latter.

Professional knowledge and competence are the *sine qua non* of leadership. Unless you know what you are talking about, unless you understand your profession, you can never be a leader.

The next thing you need for leadership is the ability to make up your mind and make a decision and accept full responsibility for that decision. Have you ever wondered why people do not make a decision? The answer is quite simple. It is because they lack professional knowledge and competence, or they are worried that their decision may be wrong and they will have to carry the can. According to the law of averages, if you take ten decisions, five ought to be right. If you have professional knowledge and competence, nine will be right and the one that might not be correct will probably be put right by a subordinate officer or colleague. But if you do not take a decision you are doing something wrong. An act of omission is

worse than an act of commission. An act of commission can be put right. An act of omission cannot. Take the example of the time when the Babri Masjid was about to be destroyed. If the prime minister, at that stage, had taken a decision to stop it, a whole community—180 million people—would not have been harmed. But, because he did not take a decision, you have at least 180 million people in this country alone who do not like us.

What comes next for leadership? Absolute honesty, fairness and justice—we are dealing with people.

We in India have tremendous pressures—pressures from the government, pressures from superior officers, pressures from families, pressures from wives, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and girlfriends, and we lack the courage to withstand those pressures. That takes me to the next attribute of leadership—moral and physical courage.

What is the moral courage? Moral courage is the ability to distinguish right from wrong and having done so, say so when asked, irrespective of what your superiors might think or what your colleagues or your subordinates might want. A 'yes man' is a dangerous man. He may rise very high, he might even be-

come the managing director of a company.

He may do anything but he can never make a leader because he will be used by his superiors, disliked by his colleagues and despised by his subordinates. So shallow—the 'yes man'.

I am going to illustrate from my own life an example of moral courage. In 1971, Pakistan clamped down on the province, East Pakistan, hundreds and thousand of refugees started pouring into India. The prime minister, Mrs Gandhi had a cabinet meeting at ten 'o clock in the morning. The following attended: the foreign minister, Sardar Swaran Singh, the defence minister, Mr Jag-



Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw
(1914-2008)

Photo: Indian Army

jivan Ram, the agriculture minister, Mr Fakruddin Ali Ahmed, the finance minister, Mr Yaswant Rao Chavan, and I was also ordered to be present.

There is a very thin line between becoming a Field Marshal and being dismissed. A very angry prime minister read out messages from chief ministers of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. All of them saying that hundreds and thousands of refugees had poured into their states and they did not know what to do .

So the Prime Minister turned round to me and said, "I want you to do something."

I said, "What do you want me to do?"

She said, "I want you to enter East Pakistan."

I said, "Do you know that that means war?"

She said, "I do not mind it is war."

I, in my usual stupid way said, "Prime Minister, have you read the Bible?" and the Foreign Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh in his Punjabi accent said, "What has Bible got to do with this?", and I said, "The first book, the first chapter, the first paragraph, the first sentence, God said, "let there be light" and there was light. You turn this round and say "let there be war and there will be

area. It will take me at least a month to get them back and put them in their correct positions. I will require every road, every railway train, every truck, every wagon to move them. We are harvesting in the Punjab, and we are harvesting in Haryana, we are also harvesting in Uttar Pradesh. And you will not be able to move your harvest."

I turned to the agriculture Minister, Mr Fakruddin Ali Ahmed, "If there is a famine in the country afterwards, it will be you to blame, not me." Then I said, "My armoured division has only got thirteen tanks which are functioning."

The finance minister, Mr Chavan, a friend of mine, said, "Sam, why only thirteen?"

"Because you are the Finance Minister. I have been asking for money for the last year and a half, and you keep saying there is no money. That is why." Then I turned to the Prime Minister and said, "Prime Minister, it is the end of April. But the time I am ready to operate the monsoon will have broken in the East Pakistan area. When it rains, it does not just rain, it pours. Rivers become like oceans. If you stand on one bank, you can not see the other and the whole countryside is flooded. My movements will be confined to roads, the Air Force will not be able to support me and, if you wish me to enter East Pakistan, I guarantee you a hundred percent defeat."

"You are the government", I said turning to the Prime Minister, "Now will you give me your orders?"

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have seldom seen a woman so angry, and I am including my wife in that. She was red in the face and I said, "Let us see what happens." She turned round and said, "The cabinet will meet this evening at four o' clock."

Everybody walked out. I being the junior-most man was the last to leave. As I was leaving, she said, "Chief, please will you stay behind?" I looked at her. I said, "Prime Minister, before you open your mouth, would you like me to sent in my resignation on grounds of health, mental or physical?"

"No. Sit down, Sam. Was everything you told me the truth?"

"Yes. It is my job to tell you the truth. It is my job to fight and win, not to lose."

She smiled at me and said me, "All right, Sam. You know what I want. When will you be ready?"

"I can not tell you now, Prime Minister", I said, "But let me guarantee you this that, if you leave me alone, allow me to plan, make my agreements, and fix a date, I guarantee you a hundred percent victory."

So there is a very thin line between becoming a field marshal and being dismissed. Just an exam-

Moral courage is the ability to distinguish right from wrong and having done so, say so when asked, irrespective of what others might think or might want.

war. What do you think? Are you ready for a war? Let me tell you— it's the 28th of April, the Himalayan passes are opening now, and if the Chinese give us an ultimatum I will have to fight on two fronts."

Again, Sardar Swaran Singh turned round and in his Punjabi English said, "Will China give ultimatum?"

I said, "You are the foreign minister. You tell me."

Then I turned to the prime minister and said, "Prime Minister, last year you wanted elections in West Bengal and you did not want the Communists to win, so you asked me to deploy my soldiers in penny pockets in every village, in every little township in West Bengal. I have two divisions thus deployed in sections and platoons without their heavy weapons. It will take me at least a month to get them back to their units and to their formations. Further, I have a division in the Assam area, another division in Andhra Pradesh and the Armoured division in the Jhansi-Babina

ple of moral courage. Now, those of you who remember what happened in 1962, when the Chinese occupied the Thag-la ridge and Mr Nehru, the prime minister, sent for the army chief, in the month of December and said, "I want you to throw the Chinese out." That Army Chief did not have the moral courage to stand up to him and say, "I am not ready, my troops are acclimatised, I haven't the ammunition, or indeed anything." But he accepted the Prime Minister's instructions, with the results that the Army was beaten and the country humiliated.

This takes me to the next attribute: physical courage. Fear, like hunger and sex, is a natural

phenomenon. Any man who says he is not frightened is a liar or a Gorkha. It is one thing to be frightened. It is another to show fear.

Finally, for leadership, men and women like their leader to be a man, with all the manly qualities or virtues. The man who says "I do not smoke, I do not drink, I do not (No, I will not say it), does not make a leader.

Edited extract from Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw's lecture at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, November 11th 1998. Quoted in *Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw: Soldiering with dignity* by Lt Gen Deepinder Singh (Natraj Publishers, Dehradun, 2nd Ed, 2002)

HERITAGE

Our voice in our history

Academic freedom, private funding and historical research

JAYAKRISHNAN NAIR

"THE INDUS Valley civilisation dwarfed Egypt and Mesopotamia in area and population, surpassed them in many areas of engineering and was aggressive in globalisation 5000 years back." These are words from Andrew Lawler's lead article in the June 2008 issue of *Science*, which had Indus Civilisation as the cover story.

Previously, archaeologists believed that Indus people got their ideas from Mesopotamia and were a civilisation without deep roots. But according to new evidence, the Indus civilisation evolved from the Neolithic site of Mehrgarh in Baluchistan. Archaeology has also found evidence of occupation in Harappa dating to 3700 BCE and in Farmana in India to 3500 BCE.

Writing about the religious beliefs of the Indus people, Lawler mentions that the proto-Shiva seal has fueled speculation that the religious tradition of Indus helped lay the basis for Hinduism. While there are questions to be answered on their language, religion and form of government, decades of archaeology has changed the image of Indus from a xenophobic and egalitarian society to one which was vibrant and complex.

Though the article was fairly balanced, it indulged in the dubious practice of blaming Indian archaeologists for using Hindu texts as a guide. This is a no-no, we are told, because it is inflamma-

tory to the Pakistanis, and also because India has a large Muslim population.

The article has other issues too. Drought, as a reason for the demise of Indus, is scoffed at while many other reasons, including "change in a society that they say emphasised water-related rituals" is offered as an alternative. Western scholars quoted in the article themselves admit their theories are pure speculation, but the drying up of Ghaggar-Hakra around 1900 BCE is ignored, since it would involve a reference to the Rig Veda.

As Western scholars condescendingly set the rules of the game—a very different one from that practised in their own research centres—Indians need to evaluate what can be done. Whining about unfairness can be cathartic, but it does not solve the problem.

Different standards and inept government

A few years ago, Stanford University offered a course on the historical Jesus which was an enquiry based on the scriptures. Biblical archaeology is quite popular in Israel which has the same percentage of Muslim population as India. These techniques are considered 'communal' in India.

After two centuries of searching and not finding anything spectacular, Biblical archaeology in the past half century has morphed into the archae-



Reconstructing the past

ology of the Biblical period. Archaeologists now say the Exodus did not happen, not by speculation, but after conducting extensive studies in Egypt. Indian scholars too should not indulge in speculative archaeology, but first Indian archaeologists and scholars need to be unapologetic about knowing the scriptures and using them for clues.

Such is the state of affairs that scholars who work for government funded institutions like the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and universities cannot take this approach. The Saraswati Heritage Project was canned by the UPA government as it was seen as an attempt to push the antiquity of Indian civilisation.

Recently the Indian government cut funding for a major Sanskrit program in schools because, well, India has a large Muslim population and there was a fear that it would instil religious and cultural pride among students. In such an atmosphere, it would be naïve to expect the government to lead the battle in understanding our history.

The second problem finds mention in Lawler's article itself. Indian archaeologists—R S Bisht in Dholavira and Vasant Shinde in Farmana—have done excellent work but they are slow to publish and collaborate. The lack of data from people who had first access to the location helps in sustaining myths about the civilisation.

More and merry

There is an urgent need to create institutions where scholarship is free of bureaucracy and political interference. One such institution—the Indus Heritage Centre—funded by the Global Heritage Fund is coming up in Vadodara, Gujarat. Besides starting a Smithsonian-class centre in In-

dia, the it also plans to popularise the findings of Deccan College, the Department of Archaeology of Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and the Archaeological Survey of India.

There have been xenophobic comments regarding this institution due to the involvement of Western professors, even though the professors don't believe in the discredited Aryan invasion theory. There is a fear that their application of Western frameworks on Indian history will result in misinterpretation.

But instead of complaining about the West, it is a good idea to adopt some of their techniques for popularising history. Building a Smithsonian style museum is an insuperable problem for the cash strapped ASI which can barely manage the monuments under its care. The Indus Heritage Centre model, where private donors partner academic institutions to build research centres in which native interpretation of history can happen should be considered. At this time there are only a few determined individuals who are involved in correcting Western biases; their efforts are exemplary but not sufficient to make an impact.

Several decades of research have found no archaeological evidence for the Aryan invasion theory. It has been discredited through genetic research as well. The demise of Indus Valley is understood to be due to hydrological changes. Still, pick up a book like Karen Armstrong's *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions*—which is used as text book in graduate courses—and you will find that colonial politics is still alive and any deviation is branded as nationalism.

One Indus Heritage Centre cannot change such entrenched ideas. To give megaphones to differing voices, more Indus Heritage Centres are required. This dovetails into the larger debate about the need to free higher education and research from government control and facilitate an atmosphere where private capital can provide funding. With such freedom, scholars would be able to delve into research as they see fit, instead of surrendering to artificial political fears.

Five thousand years back our ancestors living in the Indus Valley sailed across the vast Arabian sea in reed boats with cotton sails and made the best of the globalised Bronze age world. It would be a shame, if we do not show even a fraction of their ingenuity in making our voice heard in a debate about our history.

Jayakrishnan Nair writes about history, archaeology and current affairs at *Varnam* (varnam.org/blog)

Letters

On whether or not India has a coherent foreign policy

SIR—I am glad that Harsh Pant has joined the growing chorus of scholars who have asked for a cohesive national grand strategy free of partisanship. (“Adamant for drift, solid for fluidity”, by Harsh Pant, *Pragati*, No 16 - July 2008) However, I take issue with his analysis that India “continues to drift without any real sense of direction”, that there is not “one big [foreign policy] debate...to end all minor ones” and that India’s foreign policy elite is “mired in the exigencies of day-to-day pressures emanating from the immediate challenges at hand”.

Dr Pant’s analysis ignores or downplays the realities concerning India’s foreign policy establishment over the past few years, which has seen remarkable ideological continuity over two competing coalition governments. It should not be a surprise that preparations for the 1998 nuclear tests were initiated by Congress-led governments, while the groundwork for the nuclear deal was laid by the BJP. Dr Pant’s article overlooks comparisons with other countries—including the United States—whose foreign policies are considerably more fractured and irresolute. How many other governments have commissioned reports framing policy regarding its dealings with other great powers?

Finally, Dr Pant disregards concrete examples of Indian foreign policy successes over the past decade, including India’s negotiations with various countries following the 1998 tests and after July 2005, as well as India’s remarkable ability to rise “under the radar”. A dozen countries in the Asia-Pacific today, are hedging against China. Other than perhaps Pakistan and China, who is hedging against a rising India?

The real problem is that so much of what is being done in Indian foreign policy remains outside the public domain and veiled in secrecy, due to its crafting by a career bureaucracy and the na-

ture of partisan politics in India. This should all certainly be remedied. But to say that India lacks strategic direction is not in keeping with reality.

Dhruva Jaishankar
Washington, D.C.

SIR—India as a great power is not on the horizon for several decades yet. So the discussion really is tantamount to setting up a straw man of “absence of an appropriate foreign policy” based on a presumption without basis. India is lacking on all counts: it does not have a military establishment that can defeat most competitors; it does not have an economy that exercises leverage based on strength globally; it does not have a literate population that focuses on the notion of India being a great power; it is not a country that is governed by a system of laws as opposed to personalities and dynasties and so on.

Even assuming that India is on the verge of being a great power, in current circumstances it would be foolish for India to declare its foreign policy. There are major transitions taking place globally and there is too much flux in every sense. So I do think that it is fortuitous, if it is indeed ineptitude on India’s part as Harsh Pant would have us believe, that we don’t have a foreign policy. Better not to have one than to have one that is irrelevant.

Sesh Velamoor
Seattle

SIR—Critics demand a kind of public coherent articulation which only a super power can afford. But even the Americans themselves have learnt that that can all too often be a recipe for embarrassment: Cuba, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, almost all of Latin America today. Middle powers—indeed even major powers—must state their policies in more circumspect generalisations which

the critics will happily dismiss as "platitudes". Actually, these generalisations do provide an overarching framework.

The fact that India today has strategic partnerships with all major powers is not meaningless. Nor are the following facts which collectively give some idea of how India has negotiated its way through the tumultuous last four decades which have seen transformation of the world power configurations and many deadly conflicts: India is today a major military power; since 1962 India has not lost one more square inch of its territory (as Army Chief has clarified the so-called Chinese incursions are products of continuing disagreements on Line of Actual Control); East Pakistan is now Bangladesh; Sikkim is now an unchallenged part

of India; China is not supporting any of the insurgencies in India; nobody today seriously accuses India of being any other power's subordinate; India has a significant presence in South-east Asia; India has an office in Taiwan; the United States has made clear the importance it attaches to India in its own strategic vision.

All that we can say about the quote from Churchill is that there are no Neville Chamberlains in the South Block. Of course India continues to face multiple challenges; so does every other major power.

Vinod Khanna
New Delhi

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A survey of think tanks

VIJAY VIKRAM

On China policy

ABANTI BHATTACHARYA of the Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses (IDSA) condemns India for adopting an appeasing stance towards China in the face of over forty incursions by the PLA into Indian territory in the first few months of 2008.

Furthermore, New Delhi seems unable to respond effectively to Beijing's unforgiving diplomatic stance as evidenced by Beijing's latest claim to the strategically significant "Finger Tip" region in Sikkim. It seems that Atal Behari Vajpayee's hopes for a *quid pro quo* when he recognised Tibet as an integral part of China in the now infamous, "One China Policy" were misplaced.

Moreover, Ms Bhattacharya warns against being lulled into a false sense of security by the seemingly burgeoning trade relationship between India & China. Whilst the figure of billions is bandied about, 52 percent of India's exports to China comprise raw materials, much of it iron-ore. On the other hand, China is flooding Indian markets with cheap, value-added manufactured goods. This unequal trade relationship does not make China a stakeholder in India's prosperity as the liberal internationalist thesis would propound. Rather, it introduces another contentious issue in an already tense bilateral relationship.

But, the most sophisticated point that the author makes is about China's strategic assessment of India and it deserves to be fleshed out. India is hardly a blip on the Chinese strategic radar, ranked as a mediocre

power in the hierarchy of states in the international system. The few occasions that New Delhi has caused much excitement in Beijing has been with the explosion of the peaceful nuclear device in 1998 and when figuring in American attempts to hedge against China. China's strategy is to limit India to purely South Asian role while establishing itself as the sole pan-Asian power. It is this awareness of Beijing's strategy of tying down India in South Asia that should in turn imbue a revitalised China policy rather than vision statements of everlasting friendship.

Ms Bhattacharya identifies the border issue as the core irritant in Sino-Indian relations. She recommends that New Delhi should work towards a binding final solution of all its border issues with China, before China fully realises her economic and military potential and dictates a solution.

Fixing the FATA

PAKISTAN'S FEDERALLY Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have only ever been under tenuous control by the Pakistani state. In recent years, the areas surrounding the permeable border delineating Pakistan & Afghanistan have served as safe haven for anti-Western mujahideen and thus pose significant threats not only to coalition forces in Afghanistan but to the national security of the United States. Daniel Markey, a former policy planner for South Asia at the US State Department, now at the Council on Foreign Relations lays out a comprehensive strategy for "fixing the FATA".

The most significant aspect of this report lies in

the fact that it places the FATA and consequently Pakistan right at the epicentre of what Mr Markey calls the "global threat to stability". Thus, a shift in the Iraq-centric focus of US policy-makers is evident with Mr Markey calling for a "decades long commitment to the region". Of import to Indian policy-makers is Mr Markey's advocacy of generous trade packages for the Pakistani government and the continued capacity building of its state security institutions. Mr Markey urges the Bush administration to fulfil its pledge of \$300 million for the Pakistani security establishment and use this as a foundation for further aid. Thus, it should become patent to New Delhi that Washington intends not simply to court new friends in South Asia, but to keep their old ones as well.

An Indo-Israeli Alliance?

XENIA DORMANDY and Ronak Desai of Harvard's Belfer Center analyse the burgeoning relationship between India and Israel in a July policy brief. The relationship is characterised by co-operation on two main issues: first, counter-terrorism and intelligence and second, defence.

Both India & Israel have long been victims of terrorism and have exchanged intelligence on terrorist groups, their finances and logistical capabilities. Furthermore, Israel has shared its expertise in the field of counter-terrorism by providing anti-insurgency training to Indian forces. But, the most publicised aspect of the Indo-Israeli relationship lies in the realm of defence co-operation.

In 2004, Israel completed the sale of a \$1.4

billion dollar Phalcon airborne radar system to India. This event marks a watershed in Indo-Israeli ties as the United States gave its assent for Israeli weapon systems to be sold to India instead of an equally eager buyer, China.

The growing warmth of this relationship is evidenced by the May 2008 signing of agreement between an Israeli company and India's Tata group on jointly developing products for the Indian defence market. Hence, this defence relationship is evolving into something more than simply a cash for arms transfer.

The authors urge American policy-makers to be cautious when allowing the sale of Israeli-US weapons to India for fear of American defence suppliers losing out a big chunk of the worldwide defence pie to their Israeli counterparts.

But, the most salient recommendations are those that argue for India to continue to nurture its relationships with West Asia whilst intensifying its relations with Israel. Similarly, the report urges the United States to facilitate Indo-Israeli relations, but to do so privately. This is because accusations of an American-Jewish-Hindu nexus, in response to Bush's Axis of Evil are gaining credence and could cause a domestic backlash in India and even greater antagonism against America in the Muslim world where it finds itself in already vitiated environment.

Vijay Vikram is a student at the School of International Relations, University of St. Andrews.



FOREIGN POLICY

Hold steady in Afghanistan

India is on the right track and it should stay that way

SHANTHIE MARIET D'SOUZA

THE SUICIDE BOMBING attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul on July 7th—and the several smaller attacks on Indian interests that preceded it—has generated an important debate on India's Afghanistan policy. There are calls for weighing and possibly revisiting the current policy, one that is essentially based on reconstruction and long-term stabilisation of the country.

Since these attacks are a clear signal to India to either wind up or scale down its operations in the insurgency-ravaged country, analysts have demanded a massive revamp of India's present policy of mere engagement in reconstruction activities through aid in favour of an overt militaristic posture in order to secure its long-term interests. While a close analysis of the Indian engagement in Afghanistan reveals high rate of success, it also indicates vulnerability and susceptibility of Indian projects and personnel are vulnerable to systematic targeting by the forces of destabilisation in that country.

The dilemma confronting Indian policy-makers on Afghanistan is not merely limited to the country's specific interests and engagement in the reconstruction activities, but stems from India's quest to play a larger role both in regional and global affairs.

India has been a key promoter of Afghanistan's integration with South Asia—as a 'land bridge' connecting South Asia with energy-rich Central Asia. India's push for Afghanistan's inclusion in the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) was primarily directed at seeking economic and regional integration of these two regions.

Analysts note that the future trade in the region would benefit Afghanistan more than it is likely to benefit India. It is thus not surprising that Afghanistan is far more interested in these projects than the low-scale options that Pakistan offers.

Afghanistan's potential role as a land bridge further reinforces the rationale of India's

engagement with Afghanistan. Pakistan vehemently opposes India's growing influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Elements within Pakistan's military and intelligence establishment view the bonhomie and greater engagement between India and Afghanistan with suspicion. It has perennially sought to establish a client regime in Afghanistan, which it considers as its "strategic backyard". It essentially wants to hold a handle on India's links with Afghanistan and beyond. This objective is clear from its present policy of allowing Afghanistan transit rights for its exports to India, and at the same time, disallowing goods to move from India to Afghanistan.

Reconstruction initiatives

India has chosen to involve itself in the reconstruction of the nascent democracy and has resisted the temptation of getting involved in US and NATO-led military operations. India has committed itself to the long-term development and stabilisation of Afghanistan as it considers such a goal as countering the forces of destabilisation in the region.

With US\$750 million of pledged aid, India is the fifth largest bilateral donor to Afghanistan. Some of the major Indian projects include:

- Construction of the 218 km road from Zaranj in the south-western Nimroz province to Delaram in the Farah province, to facilitate movement of goods and commodities from Afghanistan to Iranian port of Chabahar. This route, once fully operational, would considerably reduce Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan for access to the sea. It allows Indian goods to reach Afghanistan bypassing Pakistan. It also provides Central Asian countries with an alternate route.
- Construction of 220 kV double circuit transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri in the North-eastern province of Baghlan to Kabul and a 220/110/20 kV sub-station at Kabul under the North-east Power System project to bring power from neighbouring countries to Kabul.
- Reconstruction and completion of Salma Dam Power Project in Herat province that would provide 42 MW of power.
- Telephone exchanges in 11 provinces connecting to Kabul, and expansion of the national television network by providing an uplink from Kabul and downlinks in all 34 provincial capitals.
- Digging of 26 tube wells in north-west Afghanistan.
- Humanitarian food assistance of one million tonnes of wheat in the form of high protein biscuits distributed to 1.4 million school children

daily under School Feeding Programme administered through World Food Programme.

- Reconstruction of hospitals including the Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health (IGICH) in Kabul
- Reconstruction of Habibia School in Kabul that was extensively damaged during the decades of incessant conflict. A number of teachers of this school underwent training in New Delhi.

India's aid primarily revolves around capacity building and active participation of the local communities. In line with this, aid policy revolves on training, transfer of technology and Afghan ownership. More than 3,000 Afghans have acquired skills like carpentry, plumbing, masonry and tailoring under Indian training programmes. Every year 1000 Afghan students are awarded scholarships for higher education and skills development. India is also involved in training Afghan police and military officers.

Most of the international aid directed at short-

Indian aid projects have generated tremendous goodwill among ordinary people. Non-participation in military operations alongside multinational forces has helped it retain this image.

term high-visibility projects in Afghanistan gets dissipated by reliance on alternative mechanisms of delivery—like NGOs and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). This reliance on alternative mechanisms and lack of co-ordination with the Afghan government has done little to build structures of governance. Consequently, little has been done to strengthen the legitimacy or extend the reach of the Afghan government in the insurgency afflicted southern and eastern regions of the country. Indian aid projects, on the contrary, through consultations with local communities, have generated tremendous goodwill among ordinary people. India's non-participation in military operations alongside multinational forces has helped it retain this image.

The threat of the resurgent Taliban

India's long term engagement in Afghanistan poses significant challenge to Pakistan's policies in that country. As a result, Indian projects as well as Indians in Afghanistan, over the years, have be-

come targets of the Taliban-al Qaeda combine and their sponsors, the ISI.

The Taliban have remained an instrument of Pakistan's foreign policy in Afghanistan. Pakistan provided the sanctuary and funding which helped the Taliban to regroup, recruit and execute ever-increasing attacks in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has diverted the huge military aid it received from the US for the war on terror to its anti-India programmes. At the same time, Islamabad has signed multiple peace deals with the Taliban, who are carrying out renewed and lethal attacks within Afghanistan. In fact, these have not even built any sustained peace in Pakistan. However, making such deals has emerged as the sole strategy of Pakistan's military establishment.

Sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, deep ethnic links on both sides of the border and steady support from Arab and other jihadist networks combine to make the Taliban and their associates indomitable forces. According to a

The ITBP security is available only for the projects taken up by the Indian government. Private Indian companies operating have to manage with available Afghan guards.

recent report, "a concatenation of at least 14 different terrorist and insurgent (outfits) based in Pakistan regularly traverse the border to target Afghan security forces and the American and NATO military units stationed there."

As a result, security in Afghanistan has rapidly deteriorated. Starting late 2007, there has been an increase in the number and intensity of suicide attacks, mostly in south, south-east and east but increasingly in Kabul and its neighbouring provinces. Since May 2008, the US and coalition forces' fatalities in Afghanistan have exceeded the death toll in Iraq. The Taliban have issued serious threats to escalate its campaign to topple the Karzai government and drive away foreign troops. The growing Taliban formidability was on full display in the daring raid on Kandahar's main prison on June 13th. Around 1,000 prisoners, including over 400 Taliban insurgents, escaped after dozens of insurgents detonated a truck bomb and overwhelmed the prison's Afghan guards. This attack was followed by another raid on June 16th when Taliban insurgents infiltrated and

occupied at least a half-dozen villages in Arghandab, a district in central Kandahar, threatening to carry out attacks on Kandahar city, just 16 km away. It took the Afghan National Army (ANA) and NATO forces three days to dislodge them from the area.

Security for the Indians projects and personnel

Providing security to the ongoing Indian infrastructure projects thus remains a critical issue in Afghanistan. Given the enveloping insecurity, any amount of security cover appears only minimal. From November 2002 till about February 2006, a minuscule contingent of 40 Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) paramilitary personnel protected India's embassy and four consulates. However, following the killing of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) driver Maniappan Kutty in November 2005 and the subsequent threat by the Taliban demanding the withdrawal of Indian reconstruction workers, the Ministries of External Affairs (MEA) and Home Affairs (MHA) re-assessed the threat perception. Based on its recommendation, the Indian government sent around 300 ITBP troops to provide security to the BRO personnel. The ITBP personnel were specially trained in proximate security and were placed under a Commandant-rank officer. The commandos provided patrolling and escort security to BRO personnel working on infrastructure projects.

The task of providing security to the infrastructure projects appears even more gigantic due to their dispersed nature, mostly in the far flung areas of the country. The 300 BRO personnel who worked on the recently completed Zaranj-Delaram road link project in the insurgency afflicted provinces were provided security by 320 ITBP personnel and 1400 Afghan security guards, who have been increasingly targeted and killed. According to unconfirmed reports, around 30 rocket attacks have been made on BRO personnel engaged in building the stretch of the road across Nimroz in the first half of 2008 alone.

The ITBP security, however, is available only for the projects taken up by the Indian government and certainly not for the private Indian companies operating in Afghanistan. For example, the New Delhi-based Water and Power Consultancy Services (WPCS) working on the Salma dam projects had to manage with the available Afghan guards. A similar option is exercised by BSC/C&C, the largest Indian construction company in Kabul. However, unlike the BRO, this company which completed projects in southern Afghanistan, including the Herat-Kandahar link, has never come under any major attack.

Policy Recommendations

Terrorist attacks, whether perpetrated by the Taliban and its affiliates (including the Haqqani network) or directed by the ISI, cannot be a reason for India to drastically alter its current policy in that country. However, they do highlight the need to protect Indian projects and personnel in the face of increasing violence in the days to come. India needs to maintain its present course as scaling down operations would be viewed as succumbing to pressure. At the same time, sending more troops or adopting militaristic posture would serve as an active propaganda material on India's military ambition and could be used to turn Afghan public opinion against the country.

India must train Afghan forces, especially the Afghan police, to augment its counter-insurgency capabilities, *vis-à-vis* the Western nations who are more focussed on building the conventional capability of the ANA. India must invest more in human and economic capital in the Pashtun population in the southern and eastern part of Afghanistan that are most affected by the Taliban insurgency. Importantly, it must continue to weave its aid policy around greater Afghan participation and ownership for long-term feasibility of its development projects.

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FOREIGN POLICY

A bigger military presence is essential

...if India is to shape Afghanistan's future.

SUSHANT K SINGH

AFGHANISTAN IS at the cross-roads and India, as a close ally of the Karzai government, has an important role to play. The debate on Indian involvement in Afghanistan is sharply polarised—between one group, which wishes to restrict Indian involvement to providing non-military support, primarily in the infrastructure and human resource development projects; and the another, which advocates Indian military involvement in Afghanistan. The arguments dominating the debate are put forth by those opposing Indian military involvement in Afghanistan: problems of overreach, difficult experiences of the US and NATO forces, uncertain commitment of the US in the region and fear of trapping the Indian armed forces in the Afghan quagmire. The most entreating argument put forth is that the current policy of soft power projection pursued by India there has so far been successful and thus warrants no change.

Shifting the battleground

A significant Indian military presence in Afghanistan will alter the geo-strategic landscape in the extended neighbourhood, by expanding India's power projection in Central Asia. India has historically had a friendly relationship with both Iran and Russia. With Iran, India can also ride on

the goodwill created by Zaranj-Delaram highway, which has provided a road link between Afghanistan and Iran. These nations could well be more amenable to an Indian military presence than they have been to the United States and its NATO allies in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani state will be denied the strategic depth it seeks by installing a favourable dispensation in Afghanistan. The Pakistani establishment will be compelled to divert its energies from their eastern to their northern borders. Loud protests can be anticipated from Pakistan against India's active military involvement in the region, but the involvement of the United States will restrict Pakistani antipathy to voluble complaints. US officials have, moreover, long been frustrated at what they view as Pakistan's failure to do enough to combat militants along its border with Afghanistan.

An Indian military involvement in Afghanistan will shift the battleground away from Kashmir and the Indian mainland. Targeting the jihadi base will be a huge boost for India's anti-terrorist operations, especially in Kashmir, both militarily and psychologically.

Till the time Islamic fundamentalist forces are active in Afghanistan and Pakistan, India's battle to contain terrorism in Kashmir will always be a

defensive one. This is because ISI and other jihadist forces across the border have the ability to calibrate the level of terrorism in India. India can counter this effectively only if it has the capacity to strategically ratchet up pressure either of Pakistan's fronts.

Consequences of failure

Some defence analysts have argued that India should not commit itself militarily to Afghanistan because Afghanistan will fall, yet again, to the Taliban as US and NATO forces are likely to pull out soon. Well, this argument ignores the fact that unlike Iraq, Afghanistan is related to the terrorist attacks on the American homeland and winning it is about ensuring US national security and pride. It is clear, and more so from the pronouncements of both presidential candidates, that the US is in Afghanistan for the long haul. Moreover, the majority of troops in Afghanistan are a part of the

Indian troops could be deployed in western Afghanistan, thereby allowing US and NATO-ISAF forces to concentrate on the provinces adjoining Afghanistan.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a NATO mission, mandated by the UN, where a significant share of soldiers and equipment comes from European countries. India must move to reinforce their commitment to see the job done.

The consequences of a Taliban victory in Afghanistan will be terrible for India to bear. Clearly, letting US and NATO forces fail in Afghanistan is not an option for the Indian state. There can be no better strategic justification for sending our troops to Afghanistan than to secure our long-term interests.

Some Indian analysts mistakenly contend that this is a war waged by the US against Islamic countries and India will end up being a stooge of the West by sending its troops in Afghanistan. This view ignores the fact that India has been under attack from Pakistan-supported jihadists that have imperilled the Indian state for nearly two decades now. India cannot be dissuaded from framing an appropriate response to terrorism just because this act closely aligns India with the US.

Military paradigm

The memory of India's intervention in the Sri Lankan civil war in the late 1980s animates any discussion on foreign troop deployments. But fears that an Indian deployment in Afghanistan will meet the same fate are unfounded. For in the intervening decades, the Indian Army has successfully fought a similar insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir. Indeed, an Afghan deployment will include the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy and help enhance India's joint operations capability. It will also enhance their external co-operation capital as they will operate in a truly multinational environment with armed forces from advanced countries.

Like the 13,000 US soldiers under the Operation Enduring Freedom operating independently alongside the NATO-ISAF, the Indian military presence should have an independent command structure. Geographically Indian troops could be deployed in western Afghanistan, allowing US and ISAF forces to concentrate on the provinces adjoining Pakistan.

India's soft power

The presence of Indian military in Afghanistan and provision of aid for infrastructure development and human resource training in the war-ravaged country are not mutually exclusive options. In any case, the ferocity of the enmity of jihadist elements against the Indian state will not be subdued, if India shuns military deployment in favour of solely executing developmental projects. Moreover India will find it much easier to successfully execute civil projects once it has stabilised the security climate by taking military control of a region. Soft power has to be an important component of any successful counter-insurgency operation; but it has to be augmented by hard power – of having military boots on ground. It will also send a strong message to the local Afghan nationals that India is in there for a long haul, putting lives of its soldiers to risk, and not restricting itself to merely throwing some alms at them, through developmental aid or projects.

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FOREIGN POLICY

The myth of Taliban tribalism

The folly of trying to set tribes against each other

JOSHUA FOUST

ONE OF the most frustrating assertions masquerading as analysis in the discussion of the conflict in Afghanistan is that the Taliban insurgent groups are being driven by Pashtun tribal loyalties: because Mullah Mohammed Omar is a Ghilzai Hotak and Hamid Karzai a Popalzai Durrani, they are somehow compelled toward war since their tribes have historically struggled for control of the country.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the Taliban are so dangerous because they break traditional tribal loyalties.

Why tribe matters less and less

One of the key organisational units in Afghanistan during the Soviet War were the *tanzim*, which loosely means “political parties.” In reality, they were at once political parties, NGOs, militia recruiters, religious movements, and sectarian armies. As such, they played a complex role in the collapse of traditional village society, and helped to create a society into which the Taliban could thrive.

The *tanzim* were not new to Afghanistan at the start of the Soviet war—since at least 1973, when Gulbuddin Hekmatyar formed the original Hizb-i Islami as an anti-communist movement later based in Pakistan, they have been at least a marginal presence in Afghan politics. But the way they were promoted at the expense of other traditional Afghan power dynamics permanently altered society.

The result was a dramatic reversal of how Afghan society was normally structured. As Barnett Rubin, a US expert on Afghanistan, noted in a 1995 book, “the biggest impact of the international system on local power structures in the early 1980s was the penetration of village and tribal society for the first time by political parties.” This penetration disrupted the traditional agricultural base of local power, and in their new positions of authority the *tanzims* relied on smuggling to raise funds. The process of “outsourcing” revenue, as it were, vastly diminished the role and importance of the khans who used to be the main community power

brokers, and the nature of Pakistan’s support ensured that any independent khan-based resistance groups would be marginalised. As a result, the *tanzims*—almost all of which were Islamist—slowly became the primary power-groups in Afghanistan during the early 1980s.

Thus was both religion politicised and politics made religious: especially in areas where the mujahideen faced increasing military pressure, commanders formed *ad hoc* coalitions in localities that they called *shuras*. The *shura* is an important concept in Islamic rule, and the decision to call these councils *shuras* rather than the traditional *jirgas* signified the Islamisation of political relationships. In practice, *shuras* resembled tribal *jirgas* in some areas, but the use of the term implied that the



A quick *shura*

council should make decisions based on Islamic rather than tribal principles. The mujahideen formed both commanders’ *shuras* and *ulama shuras*.

Alongside the *tanzim*, the *qawm* system of primary identity among Pashtuns was evolving as well. In the 1980s, for example, Kunar was dominated by a *qawm*-based coalition, but this was quickly subsumed by the Peshawar-based mujahideen establishment as the fighting evolved. It

was a monumental shift in how society organised itself. In an article for *American Anthropologist* studying this phenomenon, Nazif Shahrani notes:

Ethnicity and kinship, which are expressed linguistically through the same terms, *qawm* (people, tribe, group), *wulus* (nation, tribe, relatives), and *tyfah* (clan, tribe, group), represent the same or similar ideological frameworks in Afghanistan. Together with Islam, they provide the most fundamental bases for individuals and collective identities and loyalties...

Thus, while the *qawm* became almost more important as a means of mobilising the community into action under one of the *tanzim* (or even the government, depending on the ethnic group), the specific nature of their identity bases and makeup came to be much more strongly associated with the larger militant group to which they belonged. This is the same process that elevated ethnicity as a primary driver in national politics, as many *qawm* organised under one of the ethnic or sectarian *tanzims* that then became, for lack of a better term, voting blocs at the national level.

The *tanzim* interacted with the rest of society in a variety of ways, whether Jamiat-i-Islami under Ahmed Shah Massoud acting a bit like a quasi-Hizbollah (that is: a militia that performs social functions, such as running schools and hospitals), Mahaz-i-Milli Islam and Hezb-i-Islami (Khalis) building support through the encouragement of extremist religious demagogues, or Mr Hekmatyar's method of recruiting boys from the *madrasahs* to train into warriors for Lashkar-i-Isar.

The end result, however, was that politically motivated religious leaders came to dominate Afghan politics and society. Thus, after the Soviet withdrawal, these leaders lost their common cause, and degenerated into a horrific civil war. Ahmed Rashid's classic book *Taliban* documented this fairly well, demonstrating how it led directly to the rise of the Taliban—a group, by his own portrayal, of illiterate hicks who didn't even understand the Islam they were using as a rallying cry.

A de-tribalised insurgency

In short, there is nothing tribal about the Taliban, because by the time they emerged so much of the normal tribal and community relationships and rivalries that would ordinarily underpin society had been destroyed. Even the "original" Taliban, had a variety of both Ghilzais and Durrani in its leadership.

The neo-Taliban might have been different, except that as Antonio Giustozzi has documented in *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, there was still a variety of Ghilzai and Durrani (and others) in the Rabbani *Shura*'s membership. In fact, Karzai's tribe

the Durrani are over-represented, and make up a slim majority of the Taliban's current leadership. Furthermore, the neo-Taliban's recruitment strategies are based on Pashtun nationalism and pan-Islamism, not any kind of tribal pleas.

This has enormous implications. Previous governments in the region were able to "rule" the Pashtuns by exploiting tribal divisions, whether undermining individual leaders by exacerbating tribal division or simply by enacting rules that hold tribal leaders responsible for their community's actions.

The current structure of the Taliban, as a de-tribalised insurgency, means that the usual methods of working within the tribal system are far less effective, if at all. This is why the reconciliation effort has stalled—it just doesn't apply. Since the Taliban is a movement that is inclusive of traditionally rivalrous tribes, even some rivalrous ethnicities, that rivalry cannot be exploited to undo the movement.

Unfortunately, there are still those, such as Republican presidential candidate John McCain, who think a tribal approach to counterinsurgency—as in Anbar province of Iraq—is the best way to tackle the insurgency in Afghanistan. Such an approach could not be less effective if it was designed to be. Since the Taliban recruit from local communities for the majority of their fighters, trying to "sell" an uprising against "foreigners"—the general dynamic of the so-called "Anbar Awakening"—simply will not apply.

Corruption and disenfranchisement are driving the insurgency: the Taliban find their most eager recruits in the provinces with the most corrupt governors. They promise justice, and good Islamic values, and find traction in this because that is precisely what the Karzai government does not. Addressing the economic and structural drivers of the insurgency—and from a long term perspective, the continued appalling state of Afghan education—is the ultimate way of undermining the Taliban. Dropping more bombs and kicking down more doors is not. Recognising the folly the United States seems to wilfully commit is of incredible importance. It is, sadly, missing from almost all discussion of "what to do" about the resurgent Taliban.

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PRs Legislative Research: Monsoon Session 2008—What's in store

THE UNITED Progressive Alliance (UPA) government recently won the confidence vote in the Lok Sabha. The monsoon session of Parliament is tentatively scheduled to be held from August 11–September 5.

With the reshuffle in the UPA coalition (the Left parties replaced by the Samajwadi Party), there could be a change in the government's priorities. Bills that have been stalled due to opposition from the Left parties, may be brought back for consideration. However, not all initiatives have been blocked by the Left, and a few have been unsuccessful due to internal differences within the Congress Party and with other UPA allies.

The official list of Bills for the Monsoon session will likely be announced only in the second week of August. Here, we guess which Bills the government may now prioritise, especially those that were opposed by the Left but fall under the broad priorities of the previous NDA government. We also describe some Bills that could have been passed without the Left, but faced opposition from within the Congress Party. Finally, we highlight a few Bills that have broad political support, but are pending in Parliament. The success of the government in piloting these Bills through Parliament would depend on its ability to build a majority support within the UPA coalition and perhaps, with some parties in the opposition.

Government deficits and a growing pension bill have caused many states to delay pension payments to retired employees. The government revised the pension

scheme in 2004 so that pension for new government employees was paid based on the employee's contribution and investment gains during service rather than a defined benefit system. **The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority Bill, 2005** sets a framework for the development and regulation of this new pension system, which provides old age income security for all individuals. The BJP has publicly stated its support for this Bill,

The Forward Contracts (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2008 amends the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952. The Bill changes the role of the regulator for forward markets in commodities—the Forward Markets Commission (FMC)—from a government department to an independent regulator. It enables trading in commodity derivatives, including options, which is explicitly prohibited now. In January, the government promulgated this Bill as an Ordinance but it did not get it ratified in Parliament on opposition from the Left.

The State Bank of India (Amendment) Bill, 2006 seeks to amend the State Bank of India (SBI) Act, 1955 to reduce RBI's shareholding from 55 percent to 51 percent for equity shares of issued capital. (A subsequent Act has transferred the RBI's shareholding to Government of India, and an amendment to this Bill is required to reflect this change.)

The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2005 proposes to amend the provisions related to acquisition of banks, voting rights and transactions with related companies.

This Bill was stalled due to opposition from the left parties, primarily on the provisions related to acquisitions and voting rights.

Until a recent policy that allowed private sector ownership and management of airports, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) owned and operated all airports. AAI also acts as a regulator, which can lead to conflict of interest. The Naresh Chandra Committee recommended an independent regulator for airports, which prompted the government to introduce **The Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 2007**. The Bill establishes an independent regulator for all major airports. The Standing Committee has recommended that all 125 airports in India should be brought under the purview of this regulator.

The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) recommended two Bills—one each for agricultural and non-agricultural sectors—to provide specific benefits to workers. Following this, the government introduced **The Unorganised Sector Workers' Social Security Bill, 2007**. However, this Bill differs significantly from those drafted by the NCEUS. Unlike the NCEUS recommendations, this does not specify benefits.

Instead, it provides a framework for formulating welfare schemes specifically for the unorganised sector. Importantly, it introduces a portable smart card to be issued for targeted delivery of benefits to each worker. The Finance Minister, in his speech during the trust vote, referred to this Bill, and said that some

schemes have been rolled out.

Currently, foreign educational institutions are not permitted to operate in India. **The Foreign Educational Institutions Bill, 2007** was circulated among Rajya Sabha MPs in March 2007, but has yet to be introduced. It faced opposition from the Left who argued that higher education should not be privatised and foreign institutions should not be permitted. The Bill proposes to allow foreign educational institutions to offer educational services in India and proposes a regulatory system. It requires all foreign universities in India to register with the University Grants Commission unless they collaborate with a recognised Indian institution. The Bill also has conditions related to quality control, and specifies "prevention of commercialisation" as a condition for granting approval.

In 2004, the government proposed raising the cap for **foreign direct investment in insurance** from 26 percent to 49 percent. The measure was stalled due to opposition from the Left, and the government did not pursue this until 2006 when it constituted the Narasimhan Committee. The committee examined the issue and recommended giving the government the flexibility (through a notification) to change the 26 percent cap as needed. This process requires Parliament to pass an amendment to the Act. The Finance Minister has indicated that a suitable insurance Bill will be introduced.

Compiled by Sarita Vanka, analyst, PRS Legislative Research (prsindia.org)

ECONOMY

When it's good to slow down

The why and what next about rising inflation

VANANTHA NAGESWARAN

MANY COUNTRIES are busy joining the double-digit inflation rate club. Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and India are there. Thailand is fast converging. Latest inflation reading in Thailand is over 9 percent. Singapore and China have high single-digit inflation rates and could cross over. Last heard, the Indian government was planning a publicity campaign to tell its countrymen and women that not all of the inflation is their fault.

Even a country like Korea that has a target for the headline rate (different from the core inflation rate that America focuses on; core inflation rate excludes goods and services whose prices are rising) is responding to the inflation rate well above its target by talking much and doing little.

Long past the unemployment-inflation trade-off

Governments not just in Asia but the world over are run by economists who would swear in their sleep that there was no trade-off between inflation and employment or output. But, forced by reality to live by their theories, they are failing the test miserably. They are behaving as though there is a trade-off. They are getting it wrong.

Inflation between 10 percent and 15 percent is already destroying employment and output as it squeezes household wallets and the entrepreneur's margins. That does not sound like an

employment-generating situation. Put differently, an inflation rate of 10 percent above (there is nothing sacrosanct about 10 percent, it could be any number and it might vary from country to country) is well beyond any theoretical inflation-unemployment trade-off.

Reducing inflation from such high levels would not kill employment but, on the contrary, create jobs, as it would help to stabilise inflation expectations at a more moderate level and encourage both entrepreneurial activity and consumption unaffected by the erosion of disposable income by high inflation.

Inflation targeting lies abandoned

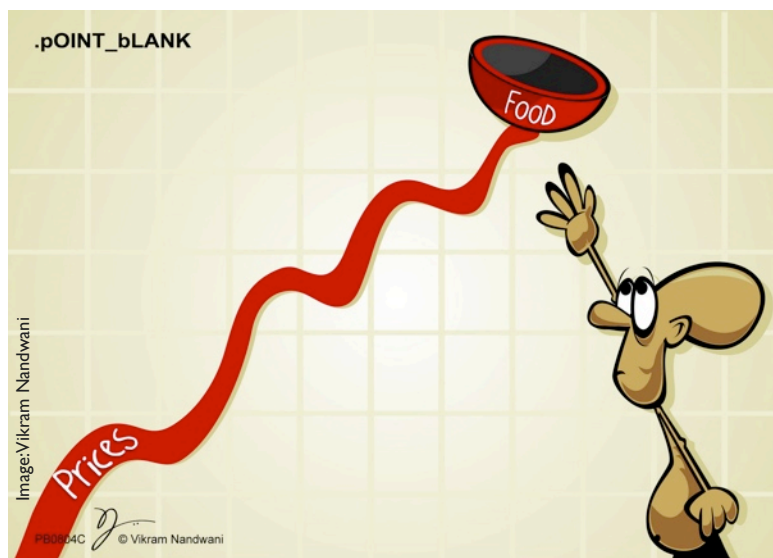
Some academics have suggested that developing countries abandon formal inflation targeting, as any attempt to bring inflation closer to the target would entail loss of employment and output.

It is not clear how many countries experiencing a double-digit inflation rate have a formal inflation targeting regime. Even if they had one, it is crystal-clear that they cared little for it as otherwise, they would not have waited until inflation crossed 10 percent. So, there is no need to call up on them to abandon inflation targeting. They have already done so.

Yes, that is indeed the problem behind high inflation today. Nearly twenty five years after Paul Volcker began to turn the tide against inflation in the United States, the battle against inflation appears much like George W Bush's "mission accomplished" in Iraq. The enemy is still going strong. Worse, much like President Bush, it appears that central banks never really fought the real enemy. It is just that inflation had remained low due to external factors other than their policy stewardship.

Did they really defeat inflation or simply took credit?

For much of the eighties and nineties, the price of crude oil remained at rock-bottom levels as did the prices of most commodities. When they began to rise, their effect was offset by the rise of China as a



low-cost producer and India as a low-cost service destination. Further, Anglo-Saxon developed nations had successfully beaten back the power of the working class in the eighties and nineties. Then, a series of crises in Asia and Latin America kept economic growth muted, reducing demand for commodities and dampening prices.

These effects have not only begun to wane but also their growth patterns (China) and macro-economic policies (monetary policy in China and fiscal policy in India) have begun to exert considerable upward pressure on commodities' prices. Pay-back time for blithely ignoring the risk of inflation has arrived now, as broad-based inflation is here to stay.

Faced with their first real test of fighting inflation, many central banks both in the developing and in the developed world are failing the test. Central banks all over the world—under government pressure or not—are too reluctant to allow their economies to slow, let alone suffer a recession.

In other words, central banks, it has become evident, happened to be running monetary policy when conventional inflation was declining of its own accord. Their expansionary monetary policies fuelled inflation in asset prices. Everybody was happy and they praised central banks for having tamed inflation when, in reality, they just got lucky.

It is very similar to how commentators wrongly credit financial innovation for the last 20 years of moderation in economic cycles. Financial innovation had nothing to do with it. The same factors that kept inflation at bay also helped dampen output and demand cycles. In fact, the only contribution that financial innovation made to this great moderation of output and inflation volatility was to end it. Similarly, the only contribution central banks are now making towards low inflation is to ensure that we don't enjoy it for a long time to come.

Should more be preferred to less at all times (or, at all costs)?

For many reasons, we need a recession in the world. Many fast growing economies have used up their economic slack. This is evident not just in the price of commodities, but in rents, wages and in the prices of other services such as education and healthcare too. Environmental damage and climate change impacts are mounting. Resources, including water, are being depleted rapidly. World economic growth just cannot go on at the pace of last five years.

Indeed, it is time to question the exalted place that pursuit of growth at all costs has come to occupy in economic discourse. That more is preferred to less is the guiding principle of modern economics. It is time to count the costs of that mantra.

Central banks can alleviate the costs of single-minded pursuit of growth, if they wish to, by putting growth on a lower pedestal and elevating other concerns such as inflation. But they are scared that it would spiral out of control. It appears that, for all the growth over the last five years, the world economy is still a fragile house of cards that it would come tumbling down if it were to have even a year of meaningful recession. If governments and central bank officials prefer more growth to ward off the consequences of growth, then the world economies are already on the same slippery slope as drug addicts are.

This ties in neatly with the theme of the paper, "Mirage of fixed exchange rates" by Obstfeld and Rogoff (1995): it is possible to have fixed exchange

Governments the world over should allow growth momentum to slow. Central banks should be given untrammelled freedom to manage short-run demand while governments work on augmenting long-term supply in sustainable ways.

rates but sometimes it could be too costly. Similarly, if they believe that recession would tame inflation, central banks can have it but they wonder if they would pay too high a price for it.

The price that they are paying and are willing to pay to maintain growth is, of course, inflation because they are miscalculating that inflation costs won't be too much compared to the cost of a recession. In the final analysis, they may still end up getting the very slowdown they are straining to avoid slightly later but with even nastier consequences.

Fiscal policy to support the poor and monetary policy to restrain demand

What then is the answer? Governments the world over should allow growth momentum to slow. It is simply unsustainable in many ways. Central banks should be given untrammelled freedom to manage short-run demand while governments work on augmenting long-term supply in sustainable ways.

Further, given that short-term demand management would squeeze the poor and that inflation would take time to come down, governments should use targeted fiscal policy to support the poor and the very poor with direct income transfers instead of tampering with the price discovery processes. The rest simply have to come to terms with it.

Instead, price-caps subsidise income categories that do not need government support. These further reduce incentives for producers to increase production to meet demand, which is what rising prices are all about. India is guilty of such follies. Price signals are essential for producers to boost supply and to restrain demand. Further, the middle and the upper income classes that benefited during boom times should be willing to or be persuaded to share the costs that boom conditions have entailed.

This underscores too the importance of running prudent fiscal policies during boom times. Quite simply, one saves for the rainy day in good times and to not overspend the fortune. Good times do

not need fiscal boosters in any case. Among the countries that have been guilty of such a conduct in recent years is India and it might yet pay a price for it in coming years.

But, don't bet on it happening

The reaction to the modest increase in the still-administered prices of energy products in India recently is a clear example of leadership failure at all levels and across the political spectrum. Short-term political gains and misguided public angst dominate national interest. When the Congress Party returns to Opposition benches, they will return the compliment. It hurts and will hurt India. Badly. It appears that the Indian democracy subsidises mediocre and inferior leadership more than the Indian government subsidises commodities.

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DEVELOPMENT

The historical roots of the services sector

...calls for a strategy that plays to India's strengths

STEPHEN BROADBERRY & BISHNUPRIYA GUPTA

INDIA'S RECENT spectacular rate of economic growth, combined with the sheer size of its population, means that it is beginning to take its place as one of the key players in the global economy. One way in which India stands out from other Asian economies is in the better performance of its service sector. Whereas other emerging Asian economies, such as China, have experienced growth led by dynamic manufacturing performance, India's growth has been led by sectors such as business services.

This is sometimes used to portray India's performance as fragile, focusing attention on shortcomings of the industrial sector. But as much of manufacturing becomes increasingly automated and "de-skilled", it is not clear that manufacturing-led growth is such a good long-run bet on the road to development. It may be that a focus on services will prove to be a better long-run route to prosperity. Furthermore, this pattern of

service-led development may be more in tune with the legacy of India's past.

Measuring long-run productivity performance

Although we know a great deal about the long-run development of developed countries, we know much less about the past performance of less developed countries such as India. In recent research, we seek to remedy this by drawing on quantitative information collected by the British during their period of colonial rule in India to compare sectoral productivity performance in Britain and India from 1870 to the present.

Our research demonstrates that India's recent service-led development has deep historical roots. During the colonial period, India's comparative productivity performance was already better in services than in industry or agriculture. This emphasis on services is in line with much recent research on long-run growth among the developed

economies, which finds services playing a key role in comparative economic performance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as during more recent times.

India has long lagged behind Britain. Between 1870 and 1970, output per worker in India fell from around 15 percent of the UK level in the economy as a whole, to less than 10 percent as India fell further behind. Since the 1970s, India has begun to catch up on the United Kingdom, but by the end of the twentieth century it was still further behind than in the early 1870s. Even with the rapid growth achieved by India in recent years, it will take time for India to regain its relative position of the late nineteenth century.

Productivity by sector

Agriculture has an important part to play in explaining this disappointing overall Indian productivity performance. The sector remains India's largest employer, accounting for three-quarters of Indian employment in the late nineteenth century and nearly two-thirds of employment today.

Furthermore, agriculture is the only sector where India has continued to fall further and further behind, with labour productivity dropping from around 10 percent of the UK level in the late nineteenth century to around one percent at the end of the twentieth. It is clear that India needs to increase productivity in agriculture if overall productivity performance is to improve substantially.

Much of the existing research on economic growth and development emphasises the role of industry. This is particularly so in the context of twentieth century Asia, where the high-profile cases of Japan, South Korea and China have all been seen as manufacturing-led development.

The Indian case, however, does not conform to this pattern, and this shows up in the comparative productivity data. Indeed, although there have been fluctuations in comparative India/UK productivity in industry, there has been no trend, with India at around 15 percent of the UK level in the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries.

Only in services has there been an improvement in comparative India/UK labour productivity, from around 15 percent in the late nineteenth century to around 30 percent by the end of the twentieth century. Services have thus played a positive role in India's productivity performance throughout the period, limiting Indian relative decline before 1870 and leading the process of catching-up from the 1970s. The service sector productivity growth is not confined to modern services such as finance—it is also visible in trade and transport.

Explaining India's better performance in services

The productivity gap between Britain and India has been smaller in services than in industry or agriculture since the First World War. The recent emergence of a dynamic service-led Indian economy thus has long historical roots. But why did the service sector perform better in India, even in colonial times? Our study suggests that the answer can be found at least in part in India's education system.

This may at first sight seem surprising, since India's record of investment in human capital, as well as in physical capital, has been less than impressive. Under-investment in education overall has clearly contributed to India's disappointing productivity performance over the long run.

But there has been a long-standing bias in educational investment towards secondary and higher education, which has produced a small group of highly educated workers, who have worked largely in services. This is relatively straightforward to demonstrate empirically for the recent past, when data are available on educational attainments of workers by sector.

It can also be shown for the colonial period, where data on literacy are available by caste. A small group of high castes, including not only the priestly Brahmins and warrior castes but also trading castes, desired secondary and higher education as well as primary education. However, the majority of the population, working in agriculture and cottage industry, required little education to perform their jobs and had little scope for advancement because of the caste system, so demand for education was depressed.

Conclusions

The first message to take away from this research is that India's service-led development may be a strength rather than a weakness. The emphasis on manufacturing as the key sector for growth and the neglect of services has now largely disappeared in the analysis of economic performance in the developed world, but continues to hold sway in the analysis of developing countries.

The second message is that history matters for long-run economic performance. A development strategy that is in tune with the legacy of the past has a better chance of success than one that requires the eradication of that legacy.

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EDUCATION



Profiting from education

Resistance against commercialisation is fruitless

ATANU DEY

INDIA'S POSITION in the emerging world of globally interconnected economies will doubtlessly be dictated by how successful it is in overcoming the severe limitation of its education system.

With an estimated 360 million of its citizens in the school-going age—a third of its entire population—it has an unmatched potential of becoming a major economic powerhouse. It has an opportunity to shape not only its own future but the future of the world at large. The challenges it faces in realising that potential are many but the most formidable of them are those that are in a sense “self-inflicted.” The greatest hurdle in India's path to the future is the near-monopoly government control of the education system.

A quick review of the numbers illuminates the challenges and opportunities. Of the total 360 million who should be in the kindergarten to standard 12 (K-12) system, around 140 million children are not in school. Not just a private loss—they will never have the opportunity to participate fully in

the global economy—it is a loss to society because they will never be able to fully contribute to it.

Yet the spending for education is large. The Indian government has allocated around US\$8.6 billion for the financial year 2009 for education; annual private spending on K-12 tuition is an additional US\$20 billion; tutoring adds another US\$5 billion a year; private professional education is another US\$7 billion. The education sector is expected to grow to around US\$70 billion by 2012. Compare that to the US\$45 billion spending for power, telecom, and transportation infrastructure in the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-2012).

Current regulations allow only non-profit trusts to run educational institutions. The results are disappointing and point to a failed public education system. Private sector schools do deliver much more than the public sector schools and do so comparatively more efficiently. Private schools account for only 7 percent of around 1 million K-12 schools and yet they accommodate 40 percent of the total enrolled. Studies only confirm what meets

the eye—public sector schools are plagued by teacher absenteeism, lack of basic infrastructure, and poor performance. India urgently needs to remedy the shortage of quality private schools.

The situation in tertiary education is not very good either. Published figures show India graduates 350,000 engineers and IT professionals a year, compared to China's 600,000 (and the United States' 130,000). The quantity appears reasonable until one recalls that only about one out of four engineers is employable. This creates the paradoxical situation of vast numbers unemployed engineers on the one hand, and on the other employers desperately seeking skilled engineers.

Comparison with another comparably large developing country—namely China—is instructive. By 2005, China was graduating around 12,000 PhDs a year, about seven times what it did in 1995; India maintained an average of 700 PhDs every year during the same period.

The education system is supply-constrained. Around 400,000 compete in the entrance examination for 10,000 seats in the few Indian Institutes of Technology, for instance. Another 240,000 took the common admissions test for the Indian Institutes of Management. On aggregate, over 2 million students take entrance tests for seats in the 1,200 private and 400 public professional schools. Test preparation is a huge market but ultimately the spending is directly unproductive and only serves as a means of rationing the limited quantity on supply relative to demand.

Unable to find the opportunity domestically, Indians spend an estimated US\$10 billion every year for higher education abroad. This lends support to the claim that if the education sector were to be liberalised—that is, if for-profit domestic and foreign private sector entities were allowed entry—then the capacity constraint will be released. Furthermore, market competition would ensure that the quality of the education would also improve.

The private sector is essentially denied the opportunity to fully participate in the education sector. Resistance against commercialisation of education is held with what approaches religious conviction. Profit from education is anathema to Indian policy-makers. The Supreme Court of India in a 1993 decision wrote: "Imparting of education has never been treated as a trade or business in this country since time immemorial. It has been treated as a religious duty. It has been treated as a charitable activity. But never as a trade or business...The *Unni Krishnan* decision does not imply that private schools cannot exist but states that they should not 'commercialise education' and impart education

with the motivation to profit from it."

But the market does find a way around and somehow manages to overcome to some degree the serious defects of the hobbled education system. However it is a costly exercise. Infosys spent US\$120 million for a training facility employing 300 teachers to train its raw recruits; Wipro trains its recruits for three months before putting them to work; Satyam trains thousands in-house similarly. Therein lies a very clear and important lesson: that for-profit entities can and do promote social welfare in the education sector—they train people to become productive, thus enhancing private and social welfare.

The argument for liberalising the education system is simple enough to state. Globalisation, which is essentially the free movement of capital in pursuit of profits, is an established fact. It means that global capital will continue to move differentially to those parts of the world where it most profitably complements the human capital available. Even though motivated by profit, global capi-

Unable to find the opportunity domestically, Indians spend an estimated US\$10 billion every year for higher education abroad. If the sector were to be liberalised, and private investment allowed, then the capacity constraints will be released.

tal has the capacity to contribute directly to rapid economic growth, as evidenced by the growth stories of the East Asian economies in the past and of China more recently.

Only those economies that have the human capital to absorb global capital will benefit from globalization. Modern manufacturing is the basis for any large modern economy. It requires skilled manpower and therefore the emphasis on education and training. Currently India does have a small but significant position in the skilled services sector of business process outsourcing and information technology enabled services. But the news there is that shortage of skilled manpower is becoming a reality.

India needs to diversify its talent pool because economic development demands the ability to produce a diverse set of goods and services. Furthermore, for India's economic growth, it has to serve as a global talent pool for all aspects of a modern economy—from services to manufacturing to research and development. Otherwise the

unskilled and poorly educated will find themselves unemployed in the face of structural changes that are guaranteed in a globalised world.

Most importantly, for driving domestic innovation, at the higher end of the education spectrum, one not only has to have quantity but world-class quality which can only be achieved if one has world-class institutions.

India has the raw numbers but lacks the financial resources to transform them into human capital in world-class educational institutions. Fortunately, global capital itself can help India build capacity for creating human capital. The argument

By removing the restriction that only allows non-profit institutions, the capacity will grow and thus permit the scarce public funds to address the needs of the 140 million children not in school currently. constraints will be released.

for it is again straightforward. Return on investment in education is positive and significant in the case of individuals. Therefore, given the ability to pay for it and the opportunity to gain an education, most people would educate themselves to their full potential. Therefore there are immense profits in education in India that global capital cannot afford to ignore.

The Indian government has to withdraw fully from tertiary education. The private sector has the incentive and the ability to provide tertiary education. Private sector investment will release the capacity constraint in education. Those who are unable to pay for the education upfront can be

helped with educational loans from private and public sector financial institutions.

For K-12, the private sector already does address 40 percent of the market. By removing the restriction that only allows non-profit institutions, the capacity will grow and thus permit the scarce public funds to address the needs of the 140 million children not in school currently. The role of the government could then shift from funding schools to funding school children.

What Indian education urgently requires is a different way of approaching the matter. The ostensible reason for not allowing private for-profit institutions is to safeguard the interests of those who are poor. But one can be sceptical of that and a reasonably argue that through its monopolistic control, the government and its agents find an opportunity to extract rents from the supply-constrained market. This creates a system in which only the rich can afford to pay the rents and the poor get rationed out.

India cannot afford the current education system any more. Too many of its children are denied an education today. Globalisation is a double-edged sword: it rewards talent as handsomely as it penalises those who are unskilled. It is quite possible for India to employ global capital to solve its local problems—provided that policy-makers understand that voluntary trade is beneficial to both parties and both profit from it. Undoubtedly global capital will profit from investing in education in India. But that is only because India will profit even more from an educated population.

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EDITOR'S PICKS

Four books about Pakistan*On nuclear proliferation, military politics and society*

NITIN PAI

A planeload of Farooqs

1986-87. Gen Zia ul Haq wanted to signal Pakistan's possession of a nuclear bomb to India. But he had to do so without damaging US President Ronald Reagan's ability to lie to Congress and the American people. He chose to have Abdul Qadeer Khan interviewed by Kuldip Nayar.

Subtlety, unfortunately, was not one of Dr A Q Khan's many vices.

"Mr Nayar, if you ever drive us to the wall, we will use the bomb. You did it to us in East Bengal. We won't waste time with conventional weapons. We will come straight out with it." The Observer splashed with it, 'Pakistan has the A-Bomb', on 1 March 1987, quoting Khan as saying, 'What the CIA has been saying about our possessing the bomb is correct. They told us that Pakistan could never produce the bomb and they doubted my capabilities, but they now know we have it.' (This was exactly the opposite of what President Reagan had been declaring to the US Congress every year—Ed)

All hell broke loose. Damage control was attempted. Mr Nayar was labelled, what else, a 'scummy RAW agent'. Shyam Bhatia, his London colleague, 'a Hindu dog in the pay of Jerusalem'. Even Pamella Bordes (remember her?) was dragged into the affair. But to no avail. Dr Khan's admission "continued to fizz and whirr like a firecracker, infuriating Zia, who demanded answers and a scapegoat".

Khan had suggested Mohammed Farooq—his deputy director in charge of foreign procurement—had been behind a plan to reveal everything to the Indian journalist. But Farooq was not in Pakistan, having decamped to Mecca on haj with his family

As Washington continued to berate Zia, he got [Lt Gen K M Arif] to call Pakistan International Airlines. Arif demanded a plane and a pilot. They were dispatched, along with a military team, to bring back Mohammed Farooq from Saudi Arabia. 'But the military team did not know what Farooq looked like. No one had thought to give them a photograph,' recalled Dr Shafiq, the son of Khan's aide, Brigadier Sajawal. 'They dared not fail. They did what all terrified men would have done and seized every Farooq holding a Pakistan passport they could find on haj.' A planeload of Farooqs was

flown back to the Chaklala airbase in Rawalpindi where they were met by Gen Arif and a phalanx of ISI officers. Arif demanded that Khan's deputy step forward and he nervously emerged from a crowd of namesakes...

But in the midst of the chaos, everyone had forgotten to bring back the wives and children of all the Mohammed Farooqs, who were abandoned to make their own way back from the haj.

These are extracts from *Deception: Pakistan, the United States and the global nuclear weapons conspiracy* (by Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, Atlantic Books), perhaps the most comprehensive, and yet the most approachable book on the sordid saga of A Q Khan, his centrifuges and immense damage that China, Pakistan and the United States did to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation. *America and the Islamic Bomb: the deadly compromise* (by David Armstrong and Joseph Trento) is a briefer account of the same story, making it all the more engrossing through an account of a British customs investigation that was thrown off the rails by powerful interests.

Both books read like fast-paced spy thrillers, because that is what they are. The only unfortunate thing about it is that the story is all too real, and none of the people who have endangered the security of millions of people have been punished. After the recent elections in Pakistan, for a moment, there was even talk of making Dr Khan the president, replacing General Pervez Musharraf.

Musharraf's retirement job

The complex web of subterfuge that has been used to save Pakistan, the United States and others from embarrassment was recently threatened by, well, none other than Dr Khan himself. In the event, his outspokenness certainly put paid to whatever chances he might have had of making it to the *Aiwan-e-Sadr*, but General Musharraf's job security remains under threat.

In case you thought that the presidency is the only government job General Musharraf holds, you are wrong. Because, in addition to being president of Pakistan, it turns out that he is also *numberdar* of the village of Chak 13 BC near Ba-

hawalpur in Punjab province. He owns real estate out there in rural Punjab, allocated to him in the proper tradition of the Pakistan army.

Numberdars are rural bigwigs appointed by the state to collect water taxes and land revenue. The *numberdar* is not paid by the government, but the office wields tremendous political clout in the village. In any case, he's in good company—General Mohammed Aziz Khan, Brigadier Ejaz Shah, Lieutenant-General Moinuddeen Haider and Lieutenant-General Shahid Pervez, all farmers since retiring from the army—are *numberdars* in nearby villages.

This nugget comes from Ayesha Siddiq's *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, a diligent study of the political-economic edifice that is the Pakistani military establishment. From cornflakes to trucking, from farms (complete with serfs) to real-estate development, the Pakistani military establishment is a dominant feature of the Pakistani economy. But it is hard to understand

of a democratic government, the issue of how to re-balance the civil-military relationship, in economic aspects as much as in politics, is of great importance. There are a number of critical questions in this regard. For instance, can the military establishment be allowed to retain its corporate interests as the price for vacating the corridors of power? Or, is it necessary to dilute its hold over economic power before its political power can be weakened? How should Pakistan's donors adapt their aid policies?

Pakistani journeys

What does Pakistan stand for, then? 'The idea of Pakistan is still vague. It does not have a democracy. It can not say we are not India. It is groping to find a reason for its existence. A country should not need to find a reason for its existence.'

Ideologies do. 'Countries do not need ideologies. They are there. By historical accident, because of geographical reasons, people find it necessary to form a group. It is too far back to ask whether Pakistan should have existed.'

Pragmatic Euphony, a blog on *The Indian National Interest* recommends Farzana Versey's maiden book, *A Journey Interrupted: Being Indian in Pakistan* (Harper Collins India). Reproduced below is the blog's review of the book.

The title of the book is slightly misleading. It lends an assumption of the book being a travelogue. Travelogue it is, at a very basic level, but an unusual, unconventional and slightly freaky one at that. If one were to put it rather blandly, it is a collection of vignettes about the many journeyings made by the author to Pakistan between April 2001 and May 2007. These vignettes form an enriching and arresting panoply of emotions, philosophies and disconcerting facts; this array of articulations is played at many levels simultaneously. Anyone who has followed the journalistic writings of the author will vouch for her creative writing skills, her mastery over the language and her vivid usage of imagery.

The superficial layer in the book is that of a conventional travelogue. The author's keen observations about the PIA flight attendants and curious noting of the *Bismillah ir Rehman ir Rahim* on the public address system as the seat belt signs are switched on, are pitched at that level. The conventional travelogue bit is interesting and enchanting, but the book really takes off when the author delves deeper into serious issues that plague the common history of the subcontinent, across the divided geography.

Her journeys are reflective of the changing geopolitical landscape with the 9/11, NATO in

Now that Pakistan has a semblance of a democratic government, the issue of how to re-balance the civil-military relationship, in economic aspects as much as in politics, is of great importance.

why the Musharraf regime banned the book, and forced its author to flee the country: there is nothing in the book that is unknown to most observers of Pakistan (and certainly not Pakistanis themselves). Moreover, it is written in English, in academic style, which would hardly make it a popular bestseller in Pakistan.

As a documentation of the Pakistani armed forces' business activities, Dr Siddiq's book is unrivalled, and has become indispensable for anyone who wishes to understand the Pakistani establishment. But Dr Siddiq need not have set it in an academic framework of a comparative study of military establishments and their commercial activities. The framework is useful, but distracts attention from what really is a book about the Pakistani military establishment. However, you can skip these bits and jump right into the main course. What is missing from the book---and something that one hopes the author will include in the next edition of this excellent book---is a prescription of how Pakistan might attempt to dismantle the "MilBus". Now that Pakistan has a semblance

Afghanistan, Kashmir, Gujarat, Karachi, Lal Masjid and many other incidents impacting the period of her reportage. Against this fast-changing backdrop, she grapples with the conflicts between societies, politics, nationalities, religions and genders; these conflicts play out in her interactions across a wide section of society on a “foreign” land. She meets their cultural icons and ventures out into other unexplored nooks and corners of that “land of the pure”—gays, junkies and other minorities and even artists, as they jostle for space on the periphery of the society. The eight pages in Chapter 10 that deal with and feature an interview with the legendary poet Ahmed Faraz are an absolute delight as they allow us to peep into the revolutionary poet’s mind.

As she progresses in her work, she peels off another layer to reveal an unfulfilled search for her real identity---as a Muslim, as an Indian and as a woman. The author is brutally honest and disarmingly frank in dealing with her often conflicting anxieties tugging her in different directions. It is disconcerting, many a times surprising, and at times even shocking as she bares her inner emotions and relates them to her experiences. All this while, there is an implicit attempt to clean the cobwebs of confusion in her minds. Despite chartering such a wide territory during a tumultuous period, most of the questions she raises and others ask of her remain unanswered at the end of the book. Probably, it is unwise to seek destinations when only the journey and the exploration *en route* matters.

Her clash of identities---of religion, culture, gender and nationality---makes for a potent concoction when blended with her independent take on all issues.

Reviewing Ms Versey’s book in *India Today*, Dilip Bobb writes that “she concludes that real peace will never come: being anti-Indian is a crucial component of the Pakistan identity despite their obsession with Bollywood films and Indian television soaps. She writes with anguish and pessimism, a journey into hearts of darkness with no light at the end of that distorted prism, mainly because as she astutely observes, ‘every few years Pakistan writes a new fiction’ to keep the embers alive.”

The book ends with a well-compiled essay titled “From Jinnah to Jihad”. At the end of a wonderfully engaging personal tale and irreverent takes, this academic piece on subcontinental history jars a little. It seems incongruous with the first two sections, although read separately in isolation, the essay would still make a nice serious reading piece. The essay confirms the fear that the author is trying to pack just about everything in these 250 odd pages, which can make the book sound disjointed and jerky at many places.

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